

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-07

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NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AEC-11

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APPROVED BY EA/J:RSNEIDER

PM/AE - MR. HANDYSIDE

EA/J - MR. LEVIN (DRAFT)

DOD/ISA - CDR GOODMAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INFO SECDEF

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COMSUBGRU SEVEN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 138574

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MOPS, PFOR, JA

SUBJECT: GOJ INQUIRY RE SSN VISITS

REFS: A. STATE 122448 B. TOKYO 7660

1. AFTER EXAMINATION OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE FULL TEXT OF JUNE 7 AKAHATA ARTICLE (REF B) THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY JAPANESE EMBOFF YAMAZAKI TO DEPT ON 10 JUNE (REF A) ARE PROVIDED TO YOU FOR TRANSMISSION TO GOJ FONOFF.

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2. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES ARE:

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT VISITS BY SSNS TO NEW YORK ARE PROHIBITED? IF SO, WHY?

A. VISITS BY US NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIPS (NPW) TO FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC PORTS ARE SUBJECT TO CAREFUL CONTROL AND ONLY THOSE PORTS FOR WHICH A MILITARY OPERATIONAL NEED EXISTS ARE USED. SSNS DO VISIT A NAVAL SUPPORT FACILITY LOCATED IN NEW JERSEY IN THE GREATER NEW YORK HARBOR AREA. HOWEVER, WITH NAVAL PORTS NEARBY THERE IS CURRENTLY NO NEED FOR VISITS TO NEW YORK CITY PROPER.

Q. ARE THERE ANY COMMERCIAL PORTS IN THE US WHERE SSN VISITS ARE PROHIBITED? IF SO, WHY?

A. THE ONLY PORTS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED "PROHIBITED" ARE THOSE WHERE THERE IS INSUFFICIENT DEPTH OF WATER TO ACCOMMODATE THE DRAFT OF NPW OR WHERE OTHER SIMILAR NAVIGATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS PRECLUDE THE VISIT. THESE SAME CONSIDERATIONS WOULD OF COURSE ALSO APPLY TO CONVENTIONALLY-POWERED WARSHIPS.

Q. WHAT US PORTS ARE REGULARLY VISITED BY SSNS AND DO THE VESSELS ENTER NAVAL OR COMMERCIAL FACILITIES?

A. NPW NORMALLY VISIT US PORTS WHERE NAVAL FACILITIES EXIST IN ORDER TO FACILITATE LOGISTIC SUPPORT. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT RULE OUT THE USE OF PORTS WITH COMMERCIAL FACILITIES WHEN AN OPERATIONAL NEED EXISTS FOR SUCH A VISIT. IN JAPAN, US NPW VISIT YOKOSUKA, SASEBO AND WHITE BEACH BECAUSE THERE ARE NAVAL FACILITIES IN THOSE PORTS.

SOME OF THE LARGE US PORTS REGULARLY VISITED BY NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIPS ARE SEATTLE (BOTH NAVAL AND COMMERCIAL FACILITIES USED); SAN FRANCISCO (NAVAL FACILITIES USED); SAN DIEGO (NAVAL FACILITIES USED); LONG BEACH (NAVAL FACILITIES USED) -- THIS IS THE PORT FOR LOS ANGELES; CHARLESTON (NAVAL FACILITIES USES); NORFOLK (NAVAL FACILITIES USED); AND NEW LONDON (NAVAL AND COMMERCIAL FACILITIES USED). NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIPS HAVE ALSO VISITED

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PHILADELPHIA (COMMERCIAL FACILITIES USED) AND MOBILE (COMMERCIAL FACILITIES USED).

Q. COULD AN SSN VISIT ANY PORT IN THE US IF IT WERE CONSIDERED NECESSARY?

A. YES, PROVIDED THERE ARE NO NAVIGATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, SUCH AS INSUFFICIENT WATER DEPTH, TO PRECLUDE THE VISIT.

3. FYI. AS EMBASSY IS NO DOUBT AWARE THESE QUESTIONS SKIRT THE SUBJECT OF REACTOR SAFEGUARDS CLEARANCES (RSC) AND THE WAY IN WHICH SUCH CLEARANCES AFFECT PORT ENTRY. THE RSC IS OF COURSE AN INTERNAL USG MATTER WHICH CANNOT BE DISCUSSED WITH THE GOJ. VISITS BY US NPWS TO LOCATIONS IN ANY PORT ARE AUTHORIZED ONLY IF THERE IS ADEQUATE MILITARY NECESSITY COMMENSURATE WITH THE DEGREE OF RISK IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT OF A REACTOR ACCIDENT AS DETERMINED THROUGH THE RSC. THUS IN THE CASE OF YOKOSUKA WE USE BERTH 8 ONLY WHEN SPECIFIC JUSTIFICATION EXISTS. THE KEY TO NPW PORT ENTRY IS THAT THESE SHIPS VISIT ONLY WHERE THEY NEED TO VISIT FOR MILITARY REASONS AND ONLY WHEN THE NEED JUSTIFIES THE LOCATION TO BE USED. END FYI

4. IN CONVEYING ABOVE ANSWERS TO FONOFF EMBASSY SHOULD POINT OUT, AS WE HAVE ON NUMEROUS PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, THAT THE CRITERIA USED BY USG TO DETERMINE WHERE NPWS CAN BERTH ARE FOLLOWED WITHOUT DEVIATION FOR ALL PORTS, BOTH FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC. THUS IF WE HAD A PORT SITUATION IDENTICAL TO YOKOSUKA IN THE UNITED STATES, THE NAVY WOULD BE USING IT IN THE SAME MANNER AS IT IS BEING USED IN JAPAN. THE SAME IS TRUE OF ANY OTHER FOREIGN PORT. SISCO

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